

Department of Justice Announces Indictments Arising From February Incident at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center

Sixteen Inmates Charged with First Degree Murder

The Delaware Department of Justice announced indictments against 18 individuals – including charging 16 individuals with first degree murder – in connection with the February 1-2, 2017 incident at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center that resulted in the murder of Lieutenant Steven Floyd, injuries to Correctional Officers Winslow Smith and Joshua Wilkinson, and the kidnapping of counselor Patricia May. The indictments were handed up Monday by a New Castle County Grand Jury and initially were sealed by the court.

The defendants are all currently incarcerated in Delaware correctional facilities and have been since Feb. 2. The indictments were initially sealed for security reasons, so that Department of Correction personnel could ensure that necessary security precautions were taken within correctional facilities to process inmates on the indictments.

Sixteen individuals have each been charged with: three counts of Murder 1st Degree (intentional murder, felony murder, and recklessly causing death of a correctional officer); two counts of Assault 1st Degree (a count each regarding C.O. Smith and C. O. Wilkinson); four counts of Kidnapping 1st Degree (a count each for Lt. Floyd, C.O. Smith, C.O. Wilkinson and counselor May); one count of Riot; and one count of

Conspiracy 2nd Degree (for conspiring to commit Riot):

1. Jarreau Ayers, age 36 – currently serving a life sentence for Murder 1st Degree and other charges
2. Abednego Baynes, age 25 – currently serving 18 years for Murder 2nd Degree
3. Kevin Berry, age 27 – currently serving 14 years for three counts of Robbery 1st Degree and other charges
4. John Bramble, age 28 – currently serving 40 years for Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, Assault Second Degree, Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, Possession of Ammunition by a Person Prohibited, and Home invasion
5. Abdul-Haqq El-Qadeer, aka Louis Sierra, age 31 – currently serving a life sentence for Murder 1st Degree
6. Deric Forney, age 28 – currently serving 11 years for Possession of a Firearm During Commission of a Felony, Possession of a Firearm By a Person Prohibited and drug charges
7. Kelly Gibbs, age 29 – currently serving 24 years 9 month sentence for Murder 2nd Degree
8. Robert Hernandez, age 36 – an inmate from New Mexico serving a 16-year sentence for Murder 2nd Degree in that state
9. Janiis Mathis, age 25 – currently serving 15 years for Assault 2nd Degree and other charges
10. Lawrence Michaels, age 31 – currently serving 19 years for Kidnapping 1st Degree, Attempted Robbery 1st Degree, Possession of a Firearm during Commission of a Felony and other charges
11. Obadiah Miller, age 25 – currently serving 10 years for Manslaughter and Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony
12. Jonatan Rodriguez, age 25 – currently serving 40 years for Manslaughter and other charges
13. Alejandro Rodriguez-Ortiz, age 27 – currently serving 40 years for Manslaughter and other charges
14. Roman Shankaras, age 30 – currently serving 7 years for

Riot and two counts of Robbery 1st

15. Corey Smith, age 32 – currently serving 14 years for a Violation of Probation for Possession of a Deadly Weapon by a Person Prohibited, Violation of Probation for Carrying a Concealed Deadly Weapon, Attempted Robbery First Degree, Assault Second Degree, Promoting Prison Contraband

16. Dwayne Staats, age 35 – currently serving a life sentence for Murder 1st Degree

Two other individuals were each charged with: four counts of Kidnapping 1st Degree (a count each for Lt. Floyd, C.O. Smith, C.O. Wilkinson and counselor May); one count of Riot; and one count of Conspiracy 2nd Degree (for conspiring to commit Riot):

1. Pedro Chairez, age 42 – an inmate from Arizona serving a 43-year sentence for Murder 2nd and other charges committed in that state

2. Royal Downs, age 52 – an inmate from Maryland serving a life sentence for Murder 1st Degree and other charges committed in that state

Attorney General Matt Denn expressed his gratitude to Delaware State Police Sergeant David Weaver, Deputy Attorneys General John Downs, Brian Robertson and Nichole Warner, the Delaware State Police Homicide Unit, Delaware State Police Criminal Investigation Units, the Delaware State Police Evidence Detection Units, and the Delaware Department of Correction for the extensive work that resulted in Monday's indictment.

"This was an extremely important and time-consuming investigation that involved unique challenges." Attorney General Denn said, "I appreciate the police and prosecutors' focus on ensuring that justice is done for the victims in this case and their families."

Because the investigation into this incident is ongoing, and because of court rules that restrict prosecutors' ability to

publicly discuss criminal matters prior to the time of trial, police and prosecutors will have no further comment about the indictments at this time.